

Flexible Volunteering

Presentation by Donna Tew, St John Ambulance

With Donna's presentation in mind:

Think about a time when you successfully recruited an ideal volunteer to your team.

What did you do that helped achieve that success?

- Use events – get out and meet people to give them the chance to ask what your volunteers do.
- Highlight the social benefits – help them understand how they can make a difference.
- Be friendly & welcoming – especially if your recruitment process is lengthy, remember to keep in touch.
- Not pressured – make it fun.
- Use beneficiaries as volunteers – starting gently and building confidence.
- Friends bring friends & personal contacts / word of mouth
- People spotting – some people just need to be asked.
- Skills matching – fit the role to them and not the other way round.
- Be enthusiastic and positive about what your organisation does.
- Engage people who don't see themselves as volunteers – avoid off-putting role names.
- Be open to new ideas – be prepared to change your approach.

Now think about a time when you had difficulty in recruiting suitable volunteers.

What challenges did you face and how did you resolve them?

- Getting to volunteering location – try using technology to maximise access.
- Safer recruitment processes (DBS) can put volunteers off – communication is important – explain why it is necessary.
- Boundaries – avoid / reduce
- Volunteers with support needs can be seen as too hard to manage – helpful to hear of case studies and examples of success: E.g. where supported volunteers have grown in confidence and ability; have moved into paid roles; are benefit not barrier to success
- Trustee roles are really hard to fill – Treasurer, Chair roles seem too challenging; try breaking the role down.
- Weekend volunteers – ask for fewer hours / break roles into smaller chunks of time
- Reward & appreciate volunteers, say thank you, pay expenses

Given the challenges and competing time pressures highlighted in the presentation

What do you do to try to keep your volunteers?

What has worked well?

- Say thank you.
- Review – what do volunteers want / not want to do?
- Training & development within role – be open to opportunities to change roles or move within the organisation.
- Bring volunteers together – opportunities for peer support / friendship
- Offer involvement – give volunteers some ownership; remember they bring valuable experience.
- Don't put off or ignore issues that might risk losing a volunteer.

Succession Planning

Presentation by David Cockshoot, Fareham Good Neighbours

Thinking about the ideas David put forward:

What steps have you taken to ensure a post can be filled when a volunteer leaves?

What about when you decide to step down?

What challenges do you anticipate?

- Shadowing experienced volunteers.
- Break a role down into smaller roles or tasks.
- Creating a pool of expert volunteers.
- Fixed terms help show that volunteers are not signed up indefinitely. With option to add 1 year max if needed.
- Think of volunteer support in terms of tasks – not an overwhelming role.
- Review constitution – make sure it is clear and fit for purpose.
- Imposing trustees doesn't work – e.g. national orgs.
- Commit to serve a fixed term plus coaching the replacement before handover.
- Risk register to highlight and review impact of loss of volunteers.
- Keep good records to aid handover.
- Don't sustain organisations at all costs.